



Cost of Capitalism

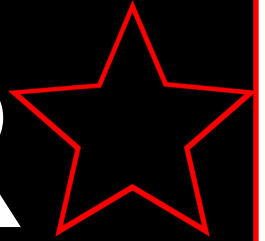


Stranmillis Two - the Fight Goes On

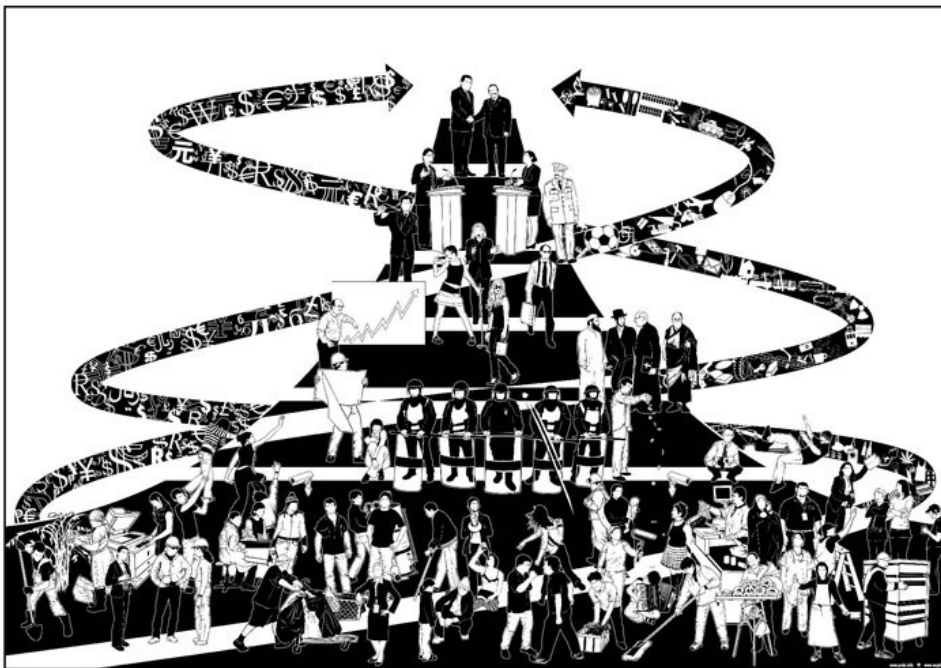


Class War at Royal Mail

BLACK STAR



It's not a crisis it's **CAPITALISM**



They work us harder, on fewer 'guaranteed' hours and with worse terms and conditions. The 'social wage', that's education (for what it's worth), water services, bin collections, street lighting, our fire service and our health service (fuck the police) have suffered attack after attack after attack.

A 'reserve army of labour' (the unemployed, under-employed and the so-

called economically inactive) is kept on a rapidly diminishing subsistence to keep those of us in work afraid. Afraid we can be replaced. Afraid we can be sacked if we have the temerity to complain. Afraid we can be scabbed on if, worse still, we organise.

Government hands out a pittance (stolen from us in our taxes and from countless millions globally through centuries of

exploitation and colonial extraction), a sticking plaster on a wound that will kill more of us - children in poverty, the 'fuel poor' elderly, the 'precarious', the poorly paid, those of us on benefits. Rocketing food, gas, oil and electricity bills kill.

It is however no crisis - profits are up. What exactly are these profits? Profits are the wealth that we, the working class, create and have stolen from us by the rich, the owners of the land, the housing, the means of production. We produce all the wealth of society - they produce fuck all.

We are essential. They are parasites. Only good at doing what parasites do - sucking the life out of their host. They will continue to get wealthier, fat and drunk on their privilege while the rest of us suffer and the planet is pushed to breaking point.

Let us make no mistake, capitalism, the system that benefits these already wealthy robbing bastards, is working perfectly.

And yet we are far from powerless. It is time to organise!

Housing Executive Strike



Two months have gone by and workers at the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are still on the picket line week in, week out. Offered just 1.75% the workers picketed a lavish Housing Executive awards ceremony being held in Titanic Belfast earlier this month. Meanwhile, Housing Executive chief Grania Long,

rejecting any move to end the dispute has claimed that the Department of Communities support the strikers, though the minister, Deirdre Hargey, has done fuck all for them and claims it's nothing to do with her or her department.

Employed by what is known in the Housing Executive as the Direct Labour Organisation, most of the workers are contracted to do maintenance works on HE properties across the North. As has been said before, these workers have had to take extra shifts, working evenings and weekends for months just to feed their families and generally make ends meet.

Like so many workers across multiple sectors, the Housing Executive workers are fighting not only for their livelihoods but their very sense of dignity in this strike. They face an employer completely impervious to their plight who seems determined to avoid any responsibility for the utterly shite pay and conditions they face, and are backed to the hilt by the politicians who preside over what is meant to be a public housing provider for working class communities.

Class War on our Posties Class War on All of Us!



Across the North local posties are joining their 115,000 striking comrades in combatting the biggest ever assault on their jobs, terms and conditions and on the postal service itself. Royal Mail management are now threatening thousands of redundancies, stripping of terms and conditions and an attack on the postal service that

Locally 3000 striking postal workers have already successfully, and repeatedly, shut down even every sorting and delivery office across the north. As Royal Mail management squirm and threaten posties (in sorting offices, delivery offices, out on walks and at the returned letter centre) with redundancies workers remain resolute in the action they are taking across the UK.

is nothing less than an exercise in asset stripping.

The action is about much more than a below inflation pay offer and the imposition of changes to terms and conditions by the multi-million making company (money made by their workers btw). That the strike is hitting them in the pocket is a measure of its success and the potential of posties to win if they

Just Books Publishing

Just Books Publishing, recently set up by the Just Books Collective (an integral part of the work of Organise!), has successfully released it's first two titles.

The first is a reprint of Gregori Petrovich Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, to mark the 100th year of existence of the Anarcho-Syndicalist International Workers Association – founded in Berlin in 1922.

isbn 9781739723705

£11.99

The second title is Nick Heath's *The Idea*.

Anarchist Communism: Past, Present and Future - a welcome and new comprehensive work on anarchist communism, this book seeks to rehabilitate the current

of anarchist-communism. To make it better known and understood.

isbn 9781739723712

£18.99

<https://organiseanarchistsireland.com/shop/>



stay the course.

Claims that the Royal Mail Group cannot afford to give workers a real pay rise are lies. Profits stand at over £758 million with millions more paid out to shareholders. Notorious cut-throat capitalist, Daniel Křetínský is now the biggest shareholder in the Royal Mail Group. Management plan nothing short of a full scale attack on workers, their terms and conditions, their union, alongside an attempt to split up Royal Mail moving what is left over to a 'gig economy' model where the service and the workers will suffer.

Strike action will be escalating in the period between now and Christmas and Organise! stand resolutely in support of these workers. In order to win they will need to fight to ensure the bureaucracy of their union does not retreat while building solidarity with the growing numbers of workers fighting back against the current onslaught.

Cost of Capitalism Crisis



'Prices are rising, so are we!' Chant at the Belfast cost of living crisis rally, 1 Oct.

Rallies were held across Britain and Ireland on Saturday, 1 October to protest against the 'cost of living crisis', the current term favoured in the mass media and slavishly parroted by the left in the latest attempts to rouse us from our slumbers and choose the 'radical alternative' come election time.

In Omagh, Belfast and Derry there were sizeable gatherings, a lot of anger and frustration but not many calls for direct action. Organise! members were in attendance in Derry and Belfast. In Belfast at least the awful sound system spared us from having to listen to calls for Stormont

to get back to work alongside complaints that all it ever did was implement neo-liberal attacks when it was working!

The so-called cost of living crisis has not been caused by a few profiteering energy giants, British imperialism, the protocol, Steven Nolan or Keir Starmer's haircut. It is the process and product of global capitalism. It's a campaign against capital we need, not a price freeze, subvention from Stormont, or a 'socialist' in charge. We understand that all of us need help now but we can only do that through collective direct action in the workplace and in our communities.

Class War Budget



He may be gone but not before carrying out a significant act of wealth redistribution! Except of course it has been redistributed upwards! At a time when we face ever increasing hardship the government have chosen to take money out of our pockets and put it in the pockets of the wealthy. Of course we are supposed to suck it up and be grateful that they have provided a pittance in 'relief' in the form of one off payments to help with increased heating and electricity costs. They can fuck off!

Working people don't get a pay raise - the rich are! So increasingly workers respond with strike action so the rich and their lackeys respond with attacks on their rights to organise. As our comrades in SolFed have pointed out: 'This is class war, pure and simple.'

Belfast's Cathedral Quarter

On 17 April, 2004, the North Street Arcade, the only example of a 1930s Art Deco arcade in Ireland, went up in flames.

The arcade was famous as the home of Terri Hooley's Cathedral Records among others and there had been a campaign against rapacious property developers who wanted to tear down the building and gentrify the area. Incendiary devices were used to gut the building but the campaign continued against the decimation of the area and its re-branding as the usual bland, corporate urban village dream of dead behind the eyes capitalist bastards.

They came up with Tribeca as the new image for the area and determined to bulldoze anyone who stood in the way of their fucking office blocks, wine bars and over-priced coffee shops. Their latest attack was launched on Monday, 3 October when the Old Cathedral Buildings went up in flames. Cathedral Buildings were home to a number of artists who have been struggling to find affordable spaces in and around the city for years.

A protest was held a few days after the blaze to demand better and cheaper spaces for artists and others around Belfast city centre. The campaign will continue because the property developers and their friends and backers on Belfast City Council are not going away. No matter who actually set the blaze they will use it to push their own agenda. We'll be there as well to block their path every step of the way and let them know this city belongs to the working class who built it, live, work and fight for it, and not the parasites who want to bleed it dry in their soulless pursuit of profit.



What we mean by class



The following article *Class: an introduction* is basically what it says, an introduction to class, a useful one at that, from our comrades at Libcom. For further information we recommend having a wee look at their site, particularly the links at the end of the article at <https://libcom.org/article/class-introduction>

Introduction

The first thing to say is that there are various ways of referring to class. Often, when people talk about class, they talk in terms of cultural/sociological labels. For example, middle-class people like foreign films, working class people like football, upper-class people like top hats and so on. Another way to talk about class, however, is based on classes' economic positions. We talk about class like this because we see it as essential for understanding how capitalist society works, and consequently how we can change it.

It is important to stress that our definition of class is not for classifying individuals or putting them in boxes, but in order to understand the forces which shape our world, why our bosses and politicians act the way they do, and how we can act to improve our conditions.

Class and capitalism

The economic system which dominates the world at present is called capitalism. Capitalism is essentially a system based on the self-expansion of capital - commodities and money making more

commodities and more money.

This doesn't happen by magic, but by human labour. For the work we do, we're paid for only a fraction of what we produce. The difference between the value we produce and the amount we're paid in wages is the "surplus value" we've produced. This is kept by our boss as profit and either reinvested to make more money or used to buy swimming pools or fur coats or whatever.

In order for this to take place, a class of people must be created who don't own anything they can use to make money i.e. offices, factories, farmland or other means of production. This class must then sell their ability to work in order to purchase essential goods and services in order to survive. This class is the working class.

So at one end of the spectrum is this class, with nothing to sell but their ability to work. At the other, those who do own capital to hire workers to expand their capital. Individuals in society will fall at some point between these two poles, but what is important from a political point of view is not the positions of individuals but the social relationship between classes.

The working class

The working class then, or 'proletariat' as it is sometimes called, the class who is forced to work for wages, or claim benefits if we cannot find work or are too sick or elderly to work, to survive. We sell

our time and energy to a boss for their benefit.

Our work is the basis of this society. And it is the fact that this society relies on the work we do, while at the same time always squeezing us to maximise profit, that makes it vulnerable.

Class struggle

When we are at work, our time and activity is not our own. We have to obey the alarm clock, the time card, the managers, the deadlines and the targets.

Work takes up the majority of our lives. We may see our managers more than we see our friends and partners. Even if we enjoy parts of our job we experience it as something alien to us, over which we have very little control. This is true whether we're talking about the nuts and bolts of the actual work itself or the amount of hours, breaks, time off etc.

Work being forced on us like this compels us to resist.

Employers and bosses want to get the maximum amount of work from us, from the longest hours, for the least pay. We, on the other hand, want to be able to enjoy our lives: we don't want to be over-worked, and we want shorter hours and more pay.

This antagonism is central to capitalism. Between these two sides is a push and pull: employers cut pay, increase hours, speed up the pace of work. But we attempt to resist: either covertly and individually by taking it easy, grabbing moments to take a break and chat to colleagues, calling in sick, leaving early. Or we can resist overtly and collectively with strikes, slow-downs, occupations etc.

This is class struggle. The conflict between those of us who have to work for a wage and our employers and governments, who are often referred to as the capitalist class, or 'bourgeoisie' in Marxist jargon.

By resisting the imposition of work, we say that our lives are more important than our boss's profits. This attacks the very nature of capitalism, where profit is

the most important reason for doing anything, and points to the possibility of a world without classes and privately-owned means of production. We are the working class resisting our own existence. We are the working class struggling against work and class.

Beyond the workplace

Class struggle does not only take place in the workplace. Class conflict reveals itself in many aspects of life.

For example, affordable housing is something that concerns all working class people. However, affordable for us means unprofitable for them. In a capitalist economy, it often makes more sense to build luxury apartment blocks, even while tens of thousands are homeless, than to build housing which we can afford to live in. So struggles to defend social housing, or occupying empty properties to live in are part of the class struggle.

Similarly, healthcare provision can be a site of class conflict. Governments or companies attempt to reduce spending on healthcare by cutting budgets and introducing charges for services to shift the burden of costs onto the working class, whereas we want the best healthcare possible for as little cost as possible.

The "middle class"

While the economic interests of capitalists are directly opposed to those of workers, a minority of the working class will be better off than others, or have some level of power over others. When talking about history and social change it can be useful to refer to this part of the proletariat as a "middle class", despite the fact that it is not a distinct economic class, in order to

understand the behaviour of different groups.

Class struggle can sometimes be derailed by allowing the creation or expansion of the middle class - Margaret Thatcher encouraged home ownership by cheaply selling off social housing in the UK during the big struggles of the 1980s, knowing that workers are less likely to strike if they have a mortgage, and allowing some workers to become better off on individual levels, rather than as a collective. And in South Africa the creation of a black middle class helped derail workers' struggles when apartheid was overturned, by allowing limited social mobility and giving some black workers a stake in the system.

Bosses try to find all sorts of ways to materially and psychologically divide the working class, including by salary differentials, professional status, race and by gender.

It should be pointed out again that we use these class definitions in order to understand social forces at work, and not to label individuals or determine how individuals will act in given situations.

Conclusion

Talking about class in a political sense is not about which accent you have but the basic conflict which defines capitalism – those of us who must work for a living vs. those who profit from the work that we do. By fighting for our own interests and needs against the dictates of capital and the market we lay the basis for a new type of society - a society based on the direct fulfilment of our needs: a libertarian communist society.

Demographics

Fixation, statistics and distraction.



With the population of the wee north edging closer to 2 million the long standing fixation with how many prods or taigs there are has reached new climatic heights. The obsession with peoples religious proclivities is based more on the very close mapping of stated religion with the political positions of our dominant and irreconcilably antagonistic nationalisms - (British) Unionist/Loyalist and (Irish) Nationalist/Republican.

It is an obsession which predates the hundred year plus existence of Northern Ireland. The entrapment of a significant catholic minority within the new Unionist statelet's border and decades of fear, discrimination and oppression sharpened further the obsessive sectarian head-counting. It was a sectarian head-counting approach that was given unassailable legitimacy when it was underpinned by the consociational institutions set up with the Good Friday Agreement. So, now our taigs outnumber our prods and Mary Lou and others have made re-energised calls for a referendum on Irish 'unity'.

Thing is the majority we see is a working class majority which has been, and will continue to be, poorly served by politics based on identity, patriotism, flags and 'tradition'. We don't really give a fuck what 'religion' is ascribed to the working class child living with poverty, the working class kids struggling at school, the working class people struggling with the latest grinding onslaught of capitalism.

The real majority here is the working class. It is time we took a few matters into our own hands!



The First International Comes to Belfast



As all anarchists know, this is a year of anniversaries. Most notably for our international, the IWA-AIT whose centenary is celebrated this year, but it is also the 150th anniversary of the 1872 Congress of Saint-Imier at which a notable blow was struck against the authoritarian state socialists. Of course they consequently took their ball and fucked off, though not before claiming that it was the anarchists who left the First International!

The International Working Men's Association (IWMA) or International Workers' Association, was founded in London on 29 September 1864, largely as a Franco-British project though quickly embracing workers from a range of European countries. Ireland's political marginalisation and landlord exploitation featured from an early stage in the propaganda of the IWA and Marx and Engels encouraged the involvement of Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) member, JP MacDonnell to oversee the expansion of the IWA into Ireland.

MacDonnell was loyal to the Marx's authoritarian tactics and sided with him and Engels against the federalist and anarchist sections, crossing swords with fellow London Irishman, John Hales (1839-1882). Hales wasn't an anarchist but he supported the majority of the IWA at Saint-Imier who opposed the centralising and

dictatorial impulses of Marx and his acolytes. The IWA first made its appearance in Cork in February 1872 though MacDonnell, as Irish secretary, reported that progress was being made mainly in the north to form branches in January. The Cork branch was gone, driven out by reactionary Catholic elements, by May 1872, but branches had been established in Dublin and Belfast sometime in March or April 1872, with another short-lived Ulster branch in Cootehill, County Cavan. The first notice of the Belfast branch appears in the papers in July 1872, where a speaker claimed the city had over 700 members during a meeting which was notable, maybe unsurprisingly, for some fractious argument over religion.

Although we don't know much more about the Belfast branch, its membership neatly overlaps with that of the Belfast Working Men's Club. The Club was formed early in 1868 as a social and educational hub, meeting in a hall in Kent Street before moving in 1871 to the Oddfellow's Hall in Academy Street. That move had been quite controversial because on 15 November 1871, a Belfast Working Men's Institute and Temperance Hall had been established in Castle Street with the idea that the Club would be housed there and membership shared.

The Institute however, continued to

block access to Club members and sponsored a talk in May 1872 by the president of the Glasgow-based Spanish Evangelisation Society, an evangelical Christian group, which was deemed to be sectarian and drew a response from the Club condemning its attempts to divide the Belfast working class. Keen to preserve both their non-sectarian identity but also their working class base, the Club rejected the more middle class leadership of the Institute and split completely from it in August 1872.

Less than a week later, sectarian rioting broke out across the city in which four people were killed, many more injured, and 247 homes were destroyed. The Club lingered on but the International seems to have disappeared, or at least become submerged in the city. One correspondent noted how the IWA branch could not be acknowledged but that the city retained many members. This makes it seem like a branch within the wider working class movement in the city centred on the Working Men's Club and Belfast Trades Council, whose origin is often dated to 1881, but which, in fact, was around as early as 1871 as a distinct body. The increasingly bourgeois Institute went from strength to strength but the Belfast Working Men's Club was gone by 1873 and most of its leading members appear to have either sunk their energies into the tribal politics of the city or emigrated.

Demands in the Strancally Castle conflict - the struggle goes on



The struggle goes on against the wealthy owners of Strancally Castle who are facing a long list of demands from their domestic and maintenance workers.

The demands are as follows:

Against unfair dismissal.

Absence of certain payslips.

Amounts paid not shown in the payslips.

Unlawful deduction of wages.

Non-payment of salaries.

Non-payment in lieu of notice.

Mandatory overtime above the maximum allowed.

Lack of proper weekly rest period.

Core terms of employment containing false or misleading information.

The workers, supported by the libertarian union of the Marina Alta region in Spain, claim that they were fired for requesting a salary increase and for raising the issue of excessive overtime on the private estate, and have announced that they will fight for reinstatement.

The anarcho-syndicalist confederation

CNT-AIT and its sister organisations of the International Workers' Association have shown their solidarity with the struggling workers, and have notified the company of the initiation of an official union dispute and the organization of a range of solidarity actions. Organise! has also shown its support for the workers' demands.

Inspectors from the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) have already confirmed payslip irregularities, certifying that the payment for overtime was made in breach of the Irish Payment of Wages Act.

The family company of the owners of the castle will have to facilitate the pay slips not delivered to the workers and regularize their salaries and taxes, and has begun a process of reviewing the payments to its large number of "domestic" workers.

In a further act of arrogance, the powerful owners of Strancally Castle, Gianni and Michael Alen-Buckley, have hired a lawyer who is appealing against the complaints of the workers, alleging that they are "not well founded", so the rest of the workers' demands are pending adjudication by the Workplace Relations Commission.

Gianni Alen-Buckley, born Giancarla Maria Gerarda Forte, and her husband Michael are facing the self-organised working class action of anarcho-syndicalists, who have dedicated more than a century of history to the fight against capitalism and for a society free of exploitation.



Meanwhile in Ballymena...



Tots emosh - Rebs is off Bake-off! Only joking, couldnae give a flying fuck about Bake-off and Ballymena's latest nonebrity.

Besides, the least said about baking cakes and Northern Ireland, the better, especially after the 'gay cake' shambles. Ashers bakery were of course supported in their fucking full-throttle bigotry for refusing to bake a cake with a slogan on it supporting gay marriage by the European Supreme Court earlier this year. More recently, one of Ballymena's openly gay councillors says he fears to hold his partner's hand on the streets of the town. Better maybe (or less worse) than the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where our comrades are still fighting for the most basic human rights for the LGBTQ+ community there.



Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.



Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier...



The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at <https://organiseanarchistsireland.com> and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com

